NICOLLET COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1928

the CROSSING

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The tale of three viruses

We Have Done this Before

by Eileen Holz
NCHS volunteer

Part Two: We leave the hospital after treatment for polio and look at what is happening on the home front.
Part one of "We Have Done this Before" appeared in the July edition of *Crossing*.

The Polio Epidemics in Nicollet County

This polio study is written as an intermediate result of years of research on Nicollet County polio victims and survivors. Information comes from many sources including newspaper reports of the epidemics, obituaries, and if I was lucky enough, interviews with the actual survivors themselves or family members, in addition to personal survivor history. I would like to personally thank NCHS volunteer Nita Aasen for her much appreciated assistance in keeping my project in mind while she did her incredible Nicollet County obituary search over the past many years. Also thank you goes to those survivors who allowed me to interview them or those who have written their own personal polio experience.

This is polio project is ongoing and this researcher would welcome any additional information on polio victims and survivors who contracted polio while living in Nicollet County.
My e-mail is: hazelart@hickorytech.net

Many of you may remember March of Dimes cards of the 1950s that held the donor's dimes until filled and donated.

While the March of Dimes organization, founded officially from the previous Georgia Warm Spring Foundation, in January 1938 by polio survivor President Franklin D. Roosevelt was going for the large donations of a dime—hence the Roosevelt Dime—in Minnesota donations started at a lesser level when Pennies for Kenny boxes appeared through the state and here in St. Peter. The St. Peter American Legion Auxiliary announced raising $110.25 in December of 1944. By 1946, $4,153.33 was the total for Nicollet County, reported Leighton Swenson who served as the county chairman.

Above: PATRONS DONATE—Ernie Menk hangs another customer's dollar donation to the March of Dimes on the cards back of the Nicollet Hotel bar as Bill Webster looks on. A total of $112.70 in dimes and dollars were donated as of Tuesday by patrons. ***St. Peter Herald***

Above: CORN FOR POLIO—This group of New Sweden township area farmers conducted their annual corn and cash drive for polio this past week, with farmers throughout the area donating corn which was then sold and the funds turned over to the March of Dimes campaign. ***St. Peter Herald***

In 1957 fundraising was quite specifically for the March of Dimes, but had expanded to diverse efforts: township farmers conducted a ***"Corn for Polio"*** campaign, with township chair Walter Webster announcing that New Sweden alone had raised $356.45. High school students became involved and "St. Peter high school contributed a total of $267.91 to the drive in a ***Teens Against Polio*** program under the chairmanship of Dale Gustafson. And elementary students pitched in also with Trinity Lutheran parochial school in Nicollet foregoing the exchange of valentines in 1953 and sending $23.50 to the March of Dimes. Other March of Dimes "special" sources included: "school collection—St. Peter public $201.80, John Ireland $42.19, Nicollet $18; organization gifts—$97.80; collection from cans in business places—$396.85; Nicollet hotel coffee party—$150.00; collection at Gustavus basketball games—$133.76; donations through Lake Telethon—$50; donations through "Party Line" radio program—$28.50." One St. Peter story recounts a clothesline strung above the Nicollet Hotel bar with dollar bill donations pinned to it for polio.

We Have Done this Before **continued on page 6**

Members

Thank you to the following renewing and new members of NCHS for 3rd quarter 2020, as of September 18th.

Renewed Benefactor Business:
Gustavus Adolphus College
Renewed Advocate Business:
New Sweden Insurance Co.
Renewed Sustaining Members:
Mark & Frani Anderson
Renewed Patron Members:
Stephen & Elizabeth Hogberg
Bill & Durene Pedersen
Janet Prehn
David Solheim
Harry & Evelyn Solo
Glenn Stryker
Dean & Jane Wahlund
Renewed Family Members:
Mark & Laura Boomgaarden
Don & Rhonda Hermanson
Julie Johnson
Mike & Maryetta McCarty
Terry & Martha Morrow
William Riebesell
Jeff & Tami Skinner
Renewed Senior Members:
Helen Christianson
Elaine Hermanson
Susan Hynes
Ruth Klossner
Catherine Neitge
Kenneth Saffert
Linda Vogel

New Supporter Member:
Deanne Lee

Now you can purchase or renew memberships **online!** Visit **nchsmn.org/membership** for details.

NCHS Board…

Executive Board Officers

Kate Martens, President, St. Peter
Tami Skinner, Vice President, St. Peter
Loren Sundboom, Treasurer, St. Peter
Matthias Leyrer, Secretary, North Mankato

Directors

Tim Bartelt, St. Peter
Tom Brown, St. George
Marie Dranttel, St. Peter
Ray Jacobson, St. Peter
Joe Metzen, St. Peter
Donna Nelson, St. Peter
Bob Sandeen, St. Peter

NCHS Staff…

Executive Director: Jessica Becker
director@nchsmn.org
Research Coordinator: Ruth Einstein
researchcoordinator@nchsmn.org
Office Manager: Elaine Deschaine
elaine@nchsmn.org
TSHC Museum Assistants:
Amanda Johnson, Erica Smith
Cox House Museum Assistant:
Sarah Busse
TSHC Janitor: Robert Weber
NCHS Webmaster: Scott Lassiter

NCHS Sites information…

Treaty Site History Center
1851 N. Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160; Fax: 507-934-0172
Closed temporarily due to community coronavirus concerns
General info via e-mail: info@nchsmn.org or research@nchsmn.org

E. St. Julien Cox House
500 N. Washington Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160
Closed for 2020 house tours due to community coronavirus concerns
For tour and rental info: cox@nchsmn.org
Watch for program info.

Tune In!

Hear Executive Director Jessica Becker on Community Affairs every fourth Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. on KNUJ Radio! Turn your dials 860 AM or listen online at knuj.net.

Director's Column

Jessica Becker

I blinked, and summer is gone. Even amidst a pandemic, time still flies while the snow isn't. I feel like most days, I wonder where the day went, but then think it's incredible that so much time has passed since it began last spring.

Like you, I'm kind of tired of being part of a major historical event. It would be so much easier to be in the museum doing our jobs, but it's just not the best idea right now. The Board has shown outstanding leadership in the face of adversity. They were a very new group when this started, and many of them had to catch up quickly. Our response immediately was to make sure the staff, volunteers, and future guests were our priority. Our staff shifted to working from home with very few hiccups. I'm so proud of these amazing people.

Moving things along during uncertain times while maintaining a sense of normalcy is the biggest part of my job these days. So behind the scenes, it's very much business as usual—just from home in yoga pants. The staff, Board, committees, and I continue to keep the day-to-day Society business running smoothly while planning and hoping for the future.

These days I'm knee-deep in next year's budget planning (my home office is wallpapered in spreadsheets), coordinating details for our upcoming programs, checking in with remote staff, working on projects, meeting with committees, and attending a lot of Zoom meetings. My regional boards have been busy too. We have a new map for the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway. We're restructuring our executive Board at the Southern Minnesota Tourism Association and just held our annual meeting via Zoom.

***Director's Column* continued on page 3**

***Director's Column* continued from page 2**

We've been able to get creative in response to this public health crisis, and I think we've done an excellent job. The Board and I knew we would take a bit of a hit keeping the doors closed this long, but it was a calculated risk we were willing to take. The health and safety concerns in buildings such as ours were too significant for us to mitigate. So we spent carefully with Board oversight, keeping the buildings unoccupied to keep expenses low. That means we will be fine for a little while. NCHS today is financially stable, and we are fortunate to have reserves that we will continue to conserve.

We're grateful from the bottom of our hearts for your continued support. We are hopeful you will renew your membership, continue to donate when you can, and support our mission whenever possible.

Please stay safe and well.

Jessica Becker
Executive Director

President's Ponderings

Kate Martens, President, NCHS Board of Directors

Greetings, everyone,

It is so nice to be able to communicate with all of you! These have been very interesting times for NCHS and the Board of Directors. It seems we have been very successful staying in touch with many of you on our wonderful new website (check it out if you haven't already at nchsmn.org), and in social media. The staff has been really creative in connecting us to Nicollet County history through the Cox House Facebook posts, Bob Sandeen's blog posts, the at-home Films on First First Thursdays (*Jim Crow of the North* this time), and most importantly, the call for applicants for the Board of Directors. The new website is fun to scroll through—I learned a lot!

You will also see the *Shadows at the Crossing: Spirits of Old Traverse des Sioux* event for October 2nd and 3rd. This will be short notice after you receive the Newsletter, and reservations are required (Covid-19, you know), but this is a fun stroll on the historic site trail meeting interesting people from our past. Hope to see you there!

The Board of Directors has been busy—all committees have met at least once. There are exciting plans for the future as we continue to be closed, as well as great ideas for when we reopen. Watch for our curbside pickup of books and items from our gift shop, there are great resources to be purchased. Again, all these can be seen on the website as they become available. Schools in the area are also getting information on how to best utilize our resources.

While we are stable with our budget, it is the season to renew memberships. These memberships are still valuable, and we are looking for more input and broader services to our members. Membership is a vital way to express support for the mission of discovering, preserving, and sharing the history of our county. Please invite any friends or businesses who would support that mission to join us!

Also, remember the upcoming GiveMN *Give to the Max Day*, offering you even more opportunities to support the mission and the physical structures. We have ongoing repairs to fund like sidewalk repair, landscaping, archives supplies, and of course, the roof.

We truly appreciate your ongoing attention and support and welcome all the contact we have had over the last six months of closure.

Thank you.

Monetary Donations

received by NCHS for the for 3rd quarter 2020, as of September 18th.

Monetary
Stephen & Elizabeth Hogberg
Ronald Rosselli
Elizabeth Russell

In-Kind
eholz graphix

Remembrances

We remember with honor Napoleon Chagnon who we lost last year

Kate Martens, President NCHS Board of Directors

RETHOS™
PLACES REIMAGINED

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

History Center Events…

For more event information visit nchsmn.org/events or facebook.com/NCHSMN

"Live From the Cox House"

Workshop Series Brings Preservation Education to Your Home

NCHS and Rethos: Places Reimagined have partnered to co-host a series of virtual building rehab workshops. The upcoming "Live From the Cox House" series is designed for any property owner interested in boosting their rehab and maintenance skills.

Over the course of three webinars, historic preservation specialist Laura Leppink will teach students about assessing the condition of your home, drafting a maintenance plan, and tackling basic window and wood rot repairs. The webinar series will use Zoom to share videos from the historic Cox House in St. Peter and feature live Q&A sessions with series instructor Laura.

The Cox House will serve as a "lab" for the webinars, offering students the opportunity to see rehab and repair demonstrations on an actual historic property. Recordings will also be available after each class.

Join us as we virtually explore the Cox House together while learning how to better take care of your beloved home.

This class is part of the education program of Rethos: Places Reimagined. Rethos: Places Reimagined, is a statewide nonprofit organization that leads and inspires people to connect to valued places in their communities. Whether it's an old home or storefront on the corner, a rural community's old high school, or an urban neighborhood's long-retired factory, Rethos works to preserve and protect the bond felt by community members toward these places, the memories such places represent, and the distinct characteristics they display.

The Rethos education program is supported in part by the Arts & Cultural Legacy Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. This project is in part funded by the Historic Preservation Education Foundation.

****** To register for any of the workshops visit rethos.org/event.***

CLASS #1 | Live From the Cox House: What's Wrong With My House?

Wednesday, October 14 | 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Love your old house? Ready to take that love to the next level? Join historic preservation specialist Laura Leppink for a crash course on how to assess your historic building's condition. Featuring the Cox House in St. Peter, Minnesota, as our "lab," this virtual workshop will teach attendees how to identify common issues in older homes, understand a building as a system, and assess your home's condition.

CLASS #2 | Live From the Cox House: Windows & Rot Repair

Thursday, October 29 | 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

In this virtual workshop, we're learning about two of the most common old home issues: windows and rot. Using examples from our "lab"—the beautiful Cox House in St. Peter, instructor Laura Leppink will demonstrate basic repairs.

CLASS #3 | Live From the Cox House: Preparing a Maintenance Plan

Thursday, November 5 | 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

The best way to prevent unexpected and expensive rehab projects is proactive maintenance. In this class, you'll learn what home maintenance tasks you should do on a seasonal or annual basis.

Building off earlier classes in our Live From the Cox House class series, historic preservation specialist Laura Leppink will walk through how to build a maintenance plan for your old home.

Shadows at the Crossing: Spirits of Old Traverse des Sioux

Friday, October 2 | 6:30–8 p.m.
Saturday, October 3 | 6:30–8 p.m.

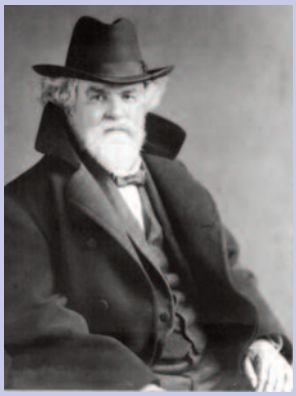
****** Registration and advanced ticket purchases required.******

Journey back more than 160 years to meet some of the pioneer citizens of Traverse des Sioux. On a lantern guided walk, meet spirits along the way, telling stories about their lives and experiences at this place.

Meet the spirits of Methodist preacher, salesman, and author Edward Eggleston, The Great Spirit Woman Nancy Eastman, fur trader Joseph LaFramboise, missionary, teacher, and linguist Stephen Riggs, and more along the shadowy trail.

"Shadows at the Crossing: Spirits of Old Traverse des Sioux" is appropriate for children as well as adults. Tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children ages 8+, and $20 for families. Nicollet County and Minnesota Historical Societies members receive a 20% discount.

****** Registration and advanced ticket purchases required.******



The author, Edward Eggleston, will be one of the "spirits" who will return to their Traverse des Sioux haunts in the October Shadows event.

Sorry, no refunds or walk-ups. Group sizes are up to 4 people of your choosing or a family of up to six. Reservations can be made for "Shadows at the Crossing" by calling Jessica at 507-380-2558. Tours begin at 6:30 p.m. with the last departing at 8 p.m. This is an outdoor event. Please dress for the weather.

History Center Events continued…

Film Series at Home

The Nicollet County Historical Society and Saint Peter Community and Family Education present our twelfth season of documentary films! This fall, our films will not be shown in person, rather, we are providing the links for you to view these films online for free in the comfort of your own home.

Documentary Film Series | October | *Jim Crow of the North*

Watch for free at
www.tpt.org/minnesota-experience/video/jim-crow-of-the-north-stijws/

Why does Minnesota suffer through some of the worst racial disparities in the nation? The team behind Mapping Prejudice looks to answer that question by examining the history of the spread of racist, restrictive real estate covenants in the early 20th century. Jim Crow of the North charts the progression of racist policies and practices from the advent of restrictive covenants after the turn of the last century, their elimination in the 1960s through to the lasting impact on our cities today.

Afterward, let us know what you thought of the film in the event on our Facebook page at facebook.com/nchsmn.

Documentary Film Series | November | *The Vote*

Watch for free at
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/vote/

One hundred years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, *The Vote* tells the dramatic culmination story of the hard-fought campaign waged by American women for the right to vote — a transformative cultural and political movement that resulted in the largest expansion of voting rights in U.S. history.

In its final decade, from 1909 to 1920, movement leaders wrestled with contentious questions about the most effective methods for affecting social change. They debated the use of militant, even violent tactics, as well as hunger strikes and relentless public protests. The battle for the vote also upended previously accepted ideas about the proper role of women in American society and challenged the definitions of citizenship and democracy.

Exploring how and why millions of 20th-century Americans mobilized for — and against — women's suffrage, *The Vote* brings to life the unsung leaders of the movement and the deep controversies over gender roles and race that divided Americans then — and continue to dominate political discourse today.

After watching the film: let us know what you thought of the film in the event on our Facebook page at facebook.com/nchsmn. What lessons can today's society learn from this political campaign? Who were the female and male suffrage leaders in your city, county, state?

Documentary Film Series | December | *Little War on the Prairie*

This is an audio documentary.
Listen for free at
https://www.thisamericanlife.org/479/little-war-on-the-prairie

Growing up in Mankato, Minnesota, John Biewen says, nobody ever talked about the most important historical event ever to happen there: in 1862, it was the site of the largest mass execution in U.S. history. Thirty-eight Dakota Indians were hanged after a war with white settlers. John went back to Minnesota to figure out what really happened 150 years ago, and why Minnesotans didn't talk about it much after. (Former NCHS Executive Ben Leonard is featured in this program.)

Afterward, let us know what you thought of the episode in the event on our Facebook page at facebook.com/nchsmn.

Give to the Max Day is November 19

Give to the Max Day is Minnesota's great giving get together, a statewide day of charitable giving. Pledge to support local history with a donation to the Nicollet County Historical Society on **November 19, 2020**.

Each gift you make to NCHS during Give to the Max Day enters you to win more prize money for us! If GiveMN randomly draws your gift, we will receive an additional prize grant. You could even help NCHS win part of the $100,000+ Prize Pool! In fact, there are 145 chances to win during Give to the Max Day and Early Giving, beginning November 1!

Our goal is to raise $1,000. Your donation of just $10 provides essential support for collections care, educational programs, future exhibits, and many other initiatives.

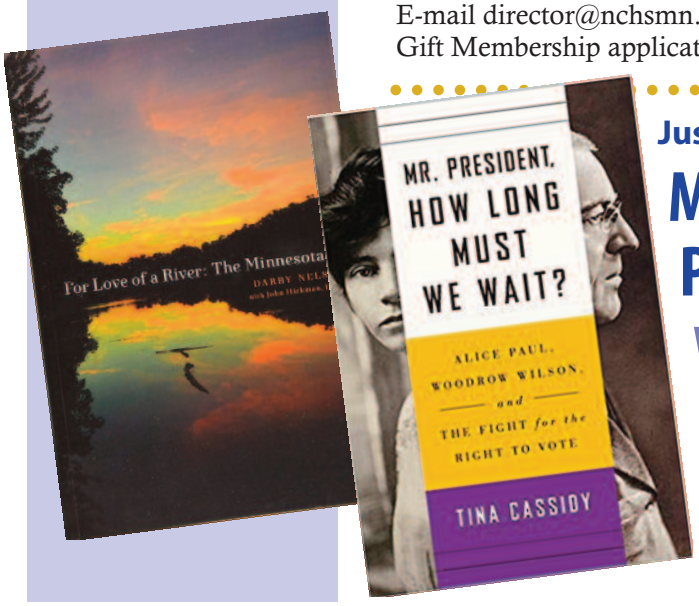
Be sure to mark your calendar and make your gift on November 19 by visiting GiveMN.org and searching for the Nicollet County Historical Society.

Give the Gift of History This Holiday Season

It's not too early to start thinking about your holiday shopping list. An NCHS membership is never out of stock, the wrong size, and it keeps giving the whole year.

Membership comes with free admission to all our sites and archives, free or discounted admission to programs, a copy of our quarterly newsletter, museum store discounts, and the peace of mind that comes from knowing you've helped an organization in need.

We really appreciate the generosity and thoughtfulness of our supporters. E-mail director@nchsmn.org for a Gift Membership application.



Just in time for your holiday shopping

Museum Shop Curbside Pickup Coming Soon!

We're working hard on our newly designed online store to offer a contactless shopping experience and curbside pickup to our local customers at the Treaty Site History Center.

Our Museum Store is stocked to the brim with gifts for any history lover on your list. Keep checking our website for more information. If you have questions, please contact Jessica at 507-934-2160 or info@nchsmn.org.

From the Archives…

by Ruth Einstein
Research Coordinator

Researching at NCHS at Home

Many of us seem to be spending more time than ever online, whether we want to or not. If you find yourself wandering around the World Wide Web, take a few minutes to check out NCHS's beautiful new website. Here's what's new on the Research and Collections pages:

Click on the **RESEARCH** tab and you'll find a run-down of the resources available in the Malcolm & Donna MacKenzie Research Center and the Josie Stone Room. Although research is being conducted virtually while NCHS is closed to the public, these are the materials that can be consulted to find the answers to your burning history questions. (To make a research request, e-mail me at research@nchsmn.org or call 507-934-2160 and leave a message.)

For example, you can view the complete listing of microfilm reels of most of the newspapers published in Nicollet County going back to 1855. Did you know that at around the turn of the last century there were four newspapers in St. Peter? Volunteer Nita Aasen has compiled a complete index of all obituaries found within those newspapers, as well as burial records from cemeteries throughout the county (to the best of our current knowledge). These invaluable resources for genealogists and descendants of Nicollet County families are available online. Reminder: information about most of our county's gravesites is also available on FindAGrave.com, thanks to the efforts of Steve Carlson and Cindy Mohr, among others.

photo credit: Ruth Klossner

Salem Methodist Cemetery tombstones, Nicollet County.
As engraved on the memorial stone in front of the cemetery:
Cherished be the memory of the early pioneers who in their wisdom organized the German Salem Methodist Church and founded this cemetery in 1857.
The first religious meeting was conducted in 1857 at the John Bush home by Rev. H. Singenstrue, a German Methodist. A Society was organized with eight or nine members.
A log church was erected in 1859 one mile west of Klossner in section 5 of Lafayette township. The log structure was replaced in 1875 by a fine brick church at a cost of $3,350. The German Methodist Church was built on land owned by Geo. Durbahn on the north side of the road, 1/4 mile west of this site. A cemetery was established at this location. The church membership grew to sixty by 1882. This congregation merged with New Ulm Methodist in 1909.
By the Restoration Committee - 1981

If your interest is business history, volunteer Mike Bidelman has scoured microfilmed issues of St. Peter's newspapers for information about commercial ventures during the early years of the city's history. Marcy Muchow's photographs of business advertisements and announcements published in the *Lafayette Ledger* and *Lafayette Nicollet Ledger* provide insight into the commercial history of those communities.

Early issues of the *Ledger* are currently being digitized by the Minnesota Historical Society. A few issues are already available and searchable online at mnhs.org/newspapers/hub.

On the **SEARCH THE COLLECTION** tab, Nicollet County history buffs and fans of the NCHS Archives can find links to our online catalog and to our contributions to the Minnesota Reflections website. Minnesota Reflections contains over 1,500 digital images from our photograph and document collections, all scanned and captioned by former Research Coordinator and long-time Archives volunteer Bob Sandeen. It is hours of entertainment.

NCHS is not currently taking donations of historical materials, but if you're curious about the types of items we typically accept and typically don't, check out the many examples offered on the **DONATIONS FAQ** page. If you have materials you believe might find a home here, tell us about them by filling out a Donation Interest form, the link to which is on the **COLLECTION DONATION** page.

Even though I'm mostly working from home, I'm only an e-mail or phone message away, so please reach out if you have any area of research for which I can be of assistance.

Society to Feature Unique Collections Treasures in Upcoming Exhibit

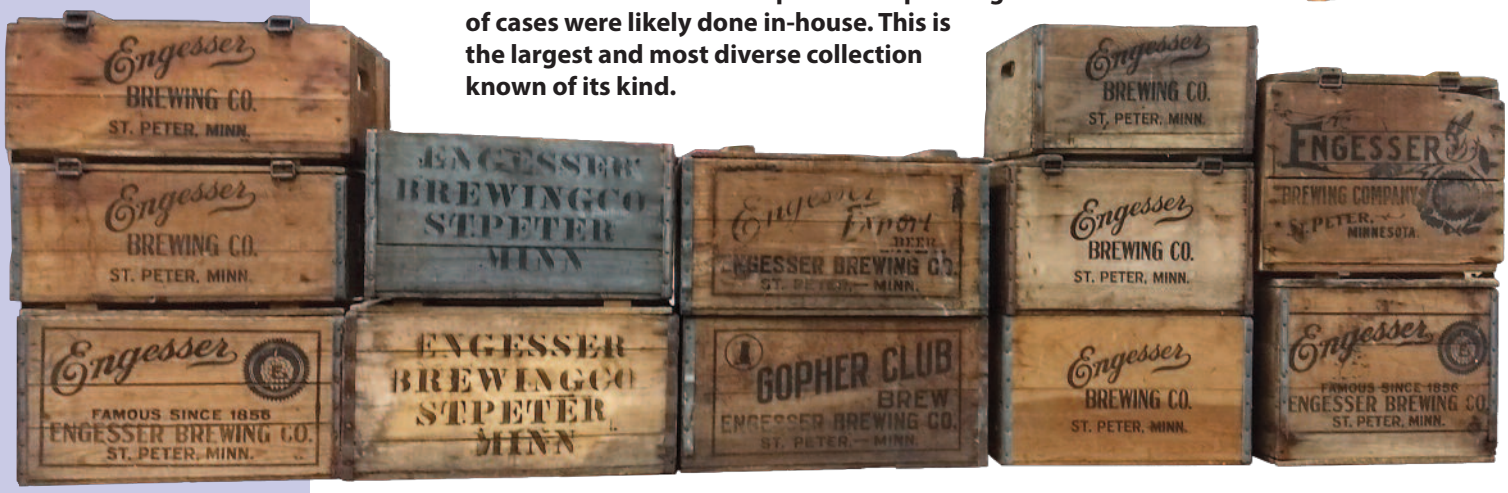
Over the years the Society has collected some fascinating, important, unique, and one-of-a-kind artifacts. They don't always fit into the exhibits we mount so we've decided to create a special eclectic display just for them.

NCHS staff, Board members, and volunteers are selecting some of their favorite items from the collection. Come see our treasures from the storerooms in April 2021.

Left: Theo. Knoll tray. The tray is a promotional item given out by Theodore Knoll, probably 1900 to 1920. It was likely not meant to be a serving tray but a wall decoration. Knoll owned and operated a dry goods store and a saloon at the south end of the east side of the 100 block of South Third Street in St. Peter.

Right: 1800s wedding dress: The wedding dress that was worn by Harriet Dodd, wife of Captain William Dodd, founder of St. Peter.

Below: Engesser Brewing Company beer cases: The cases range from the 1890s to 1942, including some from the prohibition era. Some were repainted by the brewery after prohibition to reflect the new beers being sold. Engesser also purchased and repainted other breweries' cases for their own use. Repair and repainting of cases were likely done in-house. This is the largest and most diverse collection known of its kind.



Cox House Corner…

An Update from the Cox House Committee

by Loren Sundboom, Cox House Committee Chair, and Roxane Sundboom, Cox House Committee Secretary

photo credit: Bob Sandeen

Our committee has been busy these past months. You may remember we're working on the new interpretive model for the house and phased exterior repair projects. Unfortunately, the pandemic has delayed many of our hopes and plans to install the 1890s garden, make front porch repairs, and house painting. When the economy and ability for people to move around more had loosened, we thought we could move ahead. Due to our projects' time-intensive nature and the now shortened work season, we found it difficult to find craftsmen who had the knowledge, skill, and time to accomplish them.

We are now planning and purchasing supplies needed to reinstall the backyard fence, and if the weather holds and the supplies arrive, we hope to have it installed yet this fall. Preliminary work has started on the restoration of the garden thanks to Seed to Site, LLC. We hope to host a community planting event next spring to help kick off the season. Repairs and painting will also likely be done in spring 2021. We are again looking for craftsmen to repair the front porch and paint the house.

Because of the current public health crisis, all fall and winter in-person events at the Cox House are canceled, including Christmas at the Cox House. However, we partnered with Rethos: Places Reimagined to present a virtual workshop series, "Live From the Cox House." Look for more information about this excellent series in this newsletter.

We have several new people joining the Cox House Committee, which will lighten the load for everyone!

Planning is underway to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Cox House building in 2021. We plan to have events occurring with the anniversary in mind, so please like and follow our Facebook page and keep your contact info updated so you don't miss anything. Though our timeline has shifted, we hope work will be done on the house by spring or early summer 2021, and the Cox House will once again welcome visitors with open doors.

We Have Done this Before **continued from page 1**

Above: HIGH BIDDERS—Norman Schreyer (left) and Sam Haugdahl were high bidders in the junior and senior high school in the March of Dimes polio drive auction which raised money this week for the local drive. ***St. Peter Herald***

Walton Bruns, 18 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bruns of Elysian, and an athlete at St. Peter high school, is still cheerful after more than four months in an iron lung at the University of Minnesota hospital. Walton was strucken with spinal bulbar poliomyelitis on August 31. He had joined the high school football team and was to have been a member of the St. Peter high school basketball team this season. March of Dimes drive officials pointed out this week that the excellent care being given to patients such as the Bruns boy costs "a lot of money", and much of this cost must be borne by the March of Dimes. "There can be no costs spared in the treatment of these patients, and at the same time none of us can escape our responsibility to support the drive which helps families pay the staggering costs."

22 January 1953, ***St. Peter Herald***

As with many of the relatives this researcher interviewed, parents of polio victims felt a deep appreciation for the monetary help from the county drives as evidenced in excepts of a "Polio Letter" written by Kermit Miller's mother, Mrs. Lawrence Miller. Kermit was stricken with polio in September 1952. Parents throughout the county became avid volunteers for the yearly drives.

"Perhaps one cannot fully realize what the March of Dimes means until polio strikes in one's own home, as it has in ours.…

"Let me say at the outset that there are many things that the March of Dimes can't do. It cannot erase the suffering and heartache that comes to a family when a youngster is stricken with polio. It cannot remove the agony of waiting and wondering or the pain of a child in the acute state of the disease.

"There is much, however, the March of Dimes can and does do. It helps families meet the staggering costs of polio, it speeds life-saving emergency equipment to where it is needed, it finances the training of technicians who treat our children, and it works around the clock trying to protect us from the disease through science and education.

"We are all eagerly awaiting results of the Salk polio vaccine trials, hoping that at last we may protect our youngsters against this disease. For many of us it may come too late, but the future looks brighter for all of us. Let's not forget the research that developed this vaccine was made possible through the March of Dimes.

"In short, I want to do what I can to help our community realize the importance of the work being done by the March of Dimes—and to give it unqualified support. **13 January 1953,** ***St. Peter Herald***

The ***Coffee Party Fundraiser*** was held for at least six years in the Colonial Room in the Nicollet Hotel and this event was a regular contributor to the March of Dimes. In its sixth year, the 1957 event was dedicated to Harold Bode, a St. Peter businessman and chairman of the Nicollet County chapter of the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis (NFIP) from before 1946 to his tragic death in a Highway 99/Highway 14 auto accident in January 1957. This National Foundation was a primary funder of Dr. Jonas Salk's research and for the production of the polio vaccine. The National Foundation also assisted families of polio victims being treated in Minnesota hospitals. In 1952, for example, they were assisting with hospital and nursing costs for 18 county residents with the Nicollet County chapter paying $19.50 per day per patient ($188.66/per day per patient in 2020 dollars). There were regular articles in the *Herald* of the county chapter having used up their national allocation for the year, because of the number of county patients being treated. This generosity not only led to the constant need for fundraising events but also emotionally indebted families "to the cause" when they finally had their family members home. News reports have familiar names of victims' mothers helping with events and fundraising.

And again as with COVID-19's touted "game changers" of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine the search for "the cure" for polio was rampant. As early as 1932 there is mention of "The serum technique" which this researcher assumes is similar to the "convalescent plasma" of the Spanish flu treatment in 1918. In 1950, with any hope of a vaccine still years away "William Hammon at the University of Pittsburgh purified the gamma globulin component of the blood plasma of polio survivors. Hammon proposed the gamma globulin, which contained antibodies to poliovirus, could be used to halt poliovirus infection, prevent disease, and reduce the severity of disease in other patients who had contracted polio. … Due to the limited supply of blood plasma gamma globulin was later deemed impractical for widespread use and the medical community focused on the development of a polio vaccine." The initial distribution of gamma globulin in Minnesota, driven by the mobilization office in Washington was directed to immediate families of victims and pregnant women. This method to try to stem another epidemic vastly increased the need for blood donations and Mrs. Ida Schoening, Nicollet County Red Cross blood program chairman, pleaded in 1953 "We in Nicollet county have a special stake in the gamma globulin program, because of the high incidence of polio here the past few years" and the May Red Cross blood drive collected 590 pints.

Dr. Jonas Salk (right) took on a polio virus identification project funded by NFIP in 1948 and convinced funders to extend to a search for a vaccine which lasted for 7 years. Salk's 1955 vaccine was a "dead" vaccine which in

Dr. Jonas Salk administering his vaccine, released in 1955.

photo credit: www.pressconnects

its trial phase was inoculated in 1.8 million school children. It was publically declared a success on 12 April 1955.

In March of 1955 *St. Peter Herald* "Harold Bode, chairman of the local chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, said the foundation has financed the development and production of the Salk vaccine. Contracts were made with manufacturers for a supply of vaccine costing $9,000,000 in March of Dimes funds. This enabled manufacturers to keep their production facilities in operation during the waiting period and be ready to go into full production as soon as the vaccine is licensed.

"Bode said foundation officials at the meeting last Friday were "completely optimistic" about the vaccine proving its effectiveness in the current evaluation study."

Even though there was no date set for the release of the vaccine which was still waiting for licensing in March of 1955, local Nicollet County school nurses had already set in motion the necessary parental request form distribution for the voluntary Salk vaccine immunization program. And by late 1955 school children in Nicollet County were rolling up their sleeves in sites like the Central School gymnasium for the vaccine.

Dr. Albert Sabin's (right) "live" oral Polio vaccine (OPV) worked in the intestines to block the virus from entering the bloodstream and was put into large-scale trials after testing in Russia, and in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1960. That clinical testing eradicated polio in Cincinnati. Sabin refused to patent his vaccine in order to keep the price low for those in need. Many reading this article today will remember taking the Sabin sugar cube "cure" in schools throughout the county in the 1960s.

Dr. Albert Sabin administering his "live" oral vaccine, that was either administered like cough syrup or on a sugar cube. credit: www.neh.gov/explore/albert-b-sabin-archives

Today's polio vaccine is an injected, inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) given since 2000, with a recommended four doses as a preventative measure.

Closings were commonplace though not to the extent of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. In the fall of 1946 for example, St. Peter schools were postponed for two weeks, the Nicollet and LeSueur County Fairs and the Minnesota State Fair were cancelled, children under 18 were discouraged from going to movie theatres and the Church of St. Gregory's harvest festival was postponed. The *St. Peter Herald*, dated 17 September 1948 reported that a group of 500 worried parents over-ruled State health officials and demanded schools be closed. The 24 September 1948 issue, announced that schools in St. Peter, Cleveland, and LeSueur would open on 27 September 1948 but the article was followed by an Editor Note: "The general public opinion of St. Peter is that no chances should have been taken. This public opinion also seems to be that the medical profession is in the dark on just what to do about the spread of polio and that no possible measure should be missed." An August 1952 issue announced that the St. Peter swimming pool would be closed, primarily because Mankato's pool had closed much earlier and St. Peter was concerned about an influx of swimmers from Mankato.

Unlike COVID-19 newspaper reports in 2020 protecting privacy, county polio cases were detailed front page news as in this 28 August 1952 *Herald*: "St. Peter had its first polio case of the current seasonal outbreak of the disease in the area and state the past week. Dr. Daryl Gibson, head of the music department at Gustavus Adolphus College, was taken to St. Mary's hospital after his illness was diagnosed as polio here." Likewise, polio deaths were front page news also: "Mary Ann Doran, 9-year-old daughter of Mrs. Irene Doran of 216 S. Seventh died at the Kenny Institute in Minneapolis about midnight Tuesday of bulbar type polio." And as with COVID-19 the families of polio victims lacked the support of community in their grieving, evidenced from Mary Ann's obituary "Private funeral services for young Mary Ann Doran, who succumbed to polio Tuesday evening, August 26, were held Thursday morning at 9 o'clock from St. Peter's Catholic church. The Rev. Father James Ryan officiated in the presence of the immediate members of the family and interment was in the Marysburg Catholic cemetery."

Customary actions after the detection of a polio victim in a family was QUARANTINE "and under penalty of law must remain so."

***We Have Done this Before* continued on page 12**

***We Have Done this Before* continued from page 11**

Myrna Schoeb, a good friend of polio victim Walton Bruns was also good friends with a Johnson boy (son of Bennett and Pearl Johnson) and stayed there often. After Pearl Johnson diagnosed Walton with polio and he was sent to the hospital, the Johnson home and several neighbors homes including Myrna's parent's home were quarantined for several weeks. Neighbors pitched in to help and Myrna remembers that the neighbors did the grocery shopping for the quarantined families but the bags of groceries needed to be left out by the mailboxes to avoid any possibility of spreading the disease.

Pakistani health worker gives polio vaccine to a child.
(AP Photo/Fareed Khan, File)

The World Health Organization (WHO) has made great strides toward putting polio in the same drawer with the now-eradicated smallpox virus. To be declared eradicated the virus must be undetected for three years. WHO had categorized at least four varieties of polio virus: three "wild" all caused by mutated viruses, Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3. Wild Type 3 was declared eradicated worldwide on World Polio Day, October 2019. Wild Type 2 was declared eradicated in 2012 with the last case found in Nigeria. Wild Type 1 is still "at large" in Afghanistan and Pakistan, with 94 cases found in 2019. The last case of polio that "originated" in the United States was in 1979, though in 1993 a foreign traveler brought a case into the U.S.

There is also a vaccine-derived type 2 virus derived from the live, weakened oral virus but that vaccine was replaced in 2016 by a safer oral vaccine.

The current goal for full polio eradication is 2023. "The achievement of polio eradication will be a milestone for global health," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization and chair of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, in a statement Thursday. "We remain fully committed to ensuring that all necessary resources are made available to eradicate all poliovirus strains."

Amazingly similar to the warnings of 1918 which our ancestors were seeing at the beginning of this article are the warnings for COVID-19 for citizens of today.

royalty free image from rawpixel.com

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COVID-19

So to this repetitious virus tale we must add, in 2019/20, the Novel Coronavirus pandemic, which, as with Spanish flu and Polio, comes with a nickname: COVID-19

The story remains the same, but with new terms such as "social distancing" and "stimulus packages" and "community spread" and the difference between "epidemic" and "pandemic", and "asymptomatic."

Precautions of fairs and schools and businesses closing; and the warnings and to-dos and not-to-dos are almost identical to those listed in the ad under Spanish flu, cover your cough, avoid crowds, 6-feet, wear a mask, stay at home…

Similarly to 1918, there is, in 2020, a world-wide distraction, not a war—at least not yet—but civil unrest, peaceful protests, the ugly head of racism, police brutality, and looting.

I will let NCHS member Bob Douglas, with his permission, summarize this tome for you from a recent *COVID-19 and Me* journal entry he shared for the project started by the City of Saint Peter:

THE SPANISH FLU AND COVID-19

The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 killed millions of people around the world. One was my Grandmother. She left behind 6 kids. My Mom was only 9 years old when she died. My Grandfather died in 1948. He lived 30 years more without her. I was 7 years old then. I know a little bit about my Grandpa. He had a mane of flowing white hair. He drove a Ford Model A. He loved his cows and to squirt milk into my face. He smiled a lot even though he always complained his stomach hurt. I saw him break bread into warm milk. That was his usual breakfast.

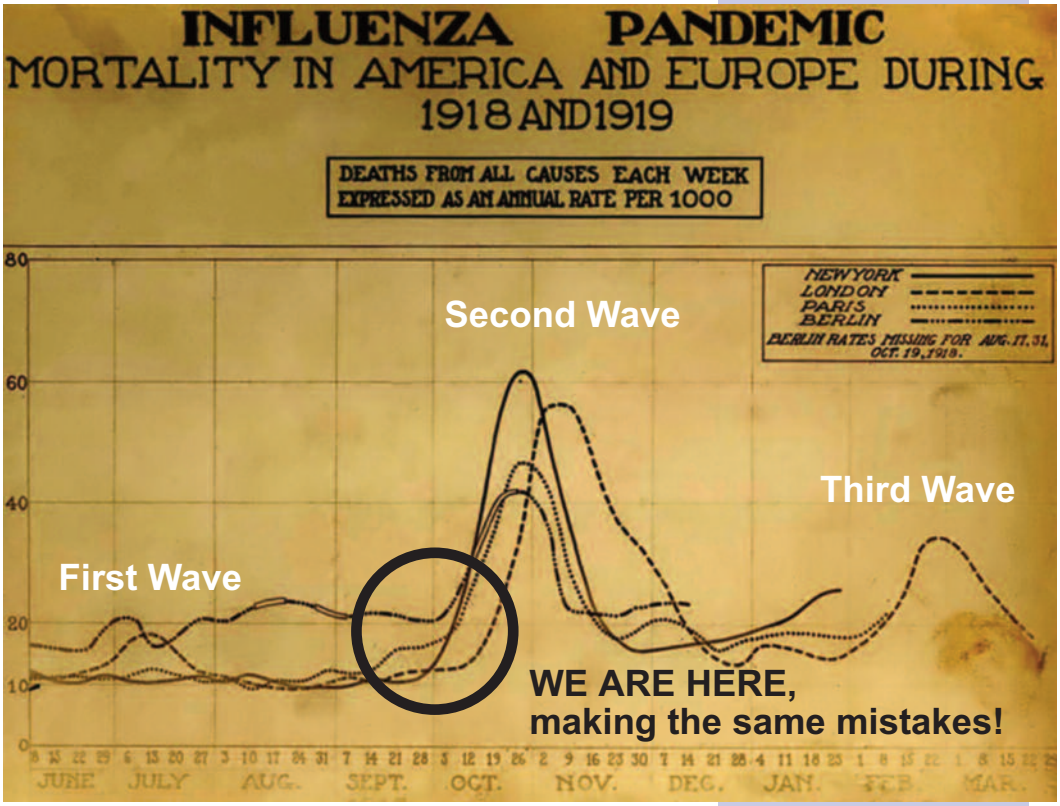
I don't know anything about my Grandma. I don't know why I never asked my Mom or Aunts and Uncles what she was like. I guess kids never think to ask those questions.What color was her hair? Did she like to play with her kids? Did she like nice clothes? Did she talk and laugh a lot? Did she smile a lot too, like her husband? When she got sick did she have to be by herself? Could she kiss her kids goodbye? Now that another flu pandemic is killing many other Grandmothers please remember what they were like. Ask those questions that I never asked. Then, years later when it is all over with, you will have no regrets.

Though there have been many flu-like epidemics since the 1918–1919 pandemic, thankfully, to date, none have reached the monumental death rates of the 1918 virus.

1918/19:	**675,000**	**in US**	**[Spanish Flu Epidemic]**
1957/58:	**70,000**	**in US**	**[Polio Epidemic]**
1968/69:	**34,000**	**in US**	**[Influenza Epidemic]**
2009/10:	**12,000**	**in US**	**[H1N1 Epidemic]**
1 June 2020:	**113,000**	**in US**	**during COVID-19 pandemic… (when Part One of this story was published.)**
16 Sept. 2020:	**194,530**	**in US**	**…and counting.**

Please note that NCHS is chronicling the personal stories of this pandemic as yet another part of Nicollet County history and welcomes your journaling and experiences during this time. From a recent NCHS Facebook post: "How do you feel about living during what could be the most historical event of this century? Are you chronicling your journey? We'd love to hear from you."

Please stay well!



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https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/05/us/coronavirus-definitions-terms-glossary-trnd/index.html

https://www.minnesotagoodage.com/voices/memories/2020/04/remembering-the-polio-epidemic/

CALL FOR BOARD MEMBERS

The Nominating Committee is currently accepting applications for two new members of the Board of Directors to start in 2021.

Being a member of the NCHS Board of Directors provides you with a unique opportunity to help make history accessible for learners of all ages. While our Board of Directors provides oversight and financial leadership, we also expect board members to take an active role in helping the Society grow and thrive.

Directors are expected to:

- Attend bi-monthly board meetings.
- Actively participate in planning, governance, and fundraising.
- Fulfill fiduciary duties.
- Serve on committees.
- Be ambassadors volunteering your time and talents at one of our historic sites or within our communities.

The best candidates have:

- A passion for history.
- Connections that can help promote NCHS.
- Experience in finance, law, and fund development.
- And the will to make a difference in the community.

The deadline for submission is Friday, November 6, 2020.

If you would like to apply or would like more information visit our website at nchsmn.org/nchs-call-for-board-members

If you have questions, please contact NCHS Executive Director Jessica Becker at 507-934-2160 or director@nchsmn.org.

A Note from the Membership Committee

Dear NCHS member,

Thank you for your membership! We appreciate your steadfast support, especially during these difficult times. Until we can welcome you back to our sites, we ask you to update/share your e-mail address to stay current on announcements, events, and more.

We invite you to explore Nicollet County's history from the comfort of your home. Get started at nchsmn.org where you can:

- Read blog posts about local people, places, and events
- Explore our collections & archives materials
- Explore your family history
- Check out upcoming events
- View online exhibits
- Renew your membership
- And more!

Are you a Snowbird?

Please remember to contact us with your winter address so NCHS news reaches you in a timely manner. E-mails are more important than ever.

Are you Moving?

If you are moving, please remember to call or send in your new contact information so you will continue to receive *The Crossing* and other Society correspondence in a timely manner. Third class bulk rate mail is not forwarded and if a newsletter is returned to us, the Society must pay the return postage.

Update contact information or share your e-mail with us by contacting Executive Director Jessica Becker at director@nchsmn.org or calling 507-934-2160.

We're grateful from the bottom of our hearts for your continued support. We are hopeful you will renew your membership, continue to donate when you can, and support our mission whenever possible.

2020 Calendar of Events: *All events are subject to public health recommendations*

Notice: Our museums remain closed to support the effort to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Oct.	**Film Series at Home: *Jim Crow of the North*,** (see details on page 5)	**watch from home**
Fri., Oct. 2	**Shadows at the Crossing:**	
	Spirits of Old Traverse des Sioux, 6:30–8 p.m. ***Registration required. (See description and registration information on page 4)*** *Tours begin at 6:30 p.m. with the last departing at 8 p.m.*	**Traverse des Sioux**
Sat., Oct. 3	**Shadows at the Crossings:**	
	Spirits of Old Traverse des Sioux, 6:30–8 p.m. ***Registration required. (See description and registration information on page 4)*** *Tours begin at 6:30 p.m. with the last departing at 8 p.m.*	**Traverse des Sioux**
Wed., Oct. 14	**Class #1: Live From the Cox House: What's Wrong With My House?,** 9 a.m. *** See page 4 for registration information.**	**Online ***
Mon., Oct. 26	**NCHS Board of Directors meeting,** 6:30 p.m.	**Location TBD**
Thu., Oct. 29	**Class #2: Live From the Cox House: Windows & Rot Repair,** 9 a.m.	**Online ***
Nov.	**Film Series at Home: *The Vote*,** (see details on page 5)	**watch from home**
Thu., Nov. 5	**Class #3: Live From the Cox House: Preparing a Maintenance Plan,** 9 a.m. *** See page 4 for registration information.**	**Online ***
Fri., Nov. 6	**Board of Directors candidate applications due**	
Thu., Nov. 19	**Give to the Max Day,** all day (see details on page 6)	
Dec.	**Film Series at Home: *Little War on the Prairie*,** (see details on page 5)	**listen from home**

Please watch the NCHS website, Facebook & Twitter and MNHS website for further events and details for additional programming.

NICOLLET COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1851 N. Minnesota Ave. • St. Peter, MN 56082

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Traverse des Sioux Townsite

Treaty Site History Center

NCHS Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

My check is enclosed ☐ Please debit my credit card ☐

Acct. Number _____

CVV Code _____ Expiration Date _____
3 #s on rev–VISA®, MC®, Disc®, 4 #s on rev–AE®

Authorized Signature _____

☐ Please save mailing costs, I will read my newsletter online.

Yes! I would like to support my Nicollet County Historical Society in 2020 at the following level (please check one).

☐	**Senior (65+)**	**$ 30**
☐	**Individual**	**$ 40**
☐	**Family**	**$ 50**
☐	**Sustaining**	**$ 75**
☐	**Patron**	**$ 100**
☐	**Supporter**	**$ 200**
☐	**Benefactor**	**$ 500**
☐	**Life Member**	**$ 1,000**
	Business Memberships	**call or e-mail for info**

Please make checks payable to:
Nicollet County Historical Society

Membership applications should be mailed to:
Nicollet County Historical Society
1851 North Minnesota Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082

PAPERLESS?? Now you can purchase or renew your membership **online!** Visit **nchsmn.org/membership** for details.